MULTI-SPECTRAL UNCOOLED MICROBOLOMETER DETECTORS

STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT INTEREST

[0001] Portions of the present invention may have been made in conjunction with Government funding under Contract Number MDA972-00-C-0023, and there may be certain rights to the Government.

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0002] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/555,469, filed March 23, 2004, hereby incorporated in its entirety by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The invention relates to microbolometers, and more particularly, to microbolometer arrays for imaging applications.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Thermal imaging cameras have been around for many years, wherein the sensitivity of the detectors to infrared (IR) radiation allows them to acquire images in darkness and through viewing obscurants such as dust and smoke. Thermal imagers designed primarily for the MWIR and LWIR spectral regions have provided a powerful tool for fire departments, emergency personnel and law enforcement agencies in addition to the military usage. For example, the Law Enforcement Thermographers Association recognizes eleven areas of usage, including search and rescue, fugitive searches, vehicle pursuits, flight safety, marine and ground surveillance, perimeter surveillance, officer safety, structure (building)